4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

CHAPTER III.

Nilotic Tribes of Kavirondo.

The generic name used of these peoples by themselves is Ja-Luo. The Bantu Kavirondo people call them Awa-Nyoro. A very common term for them is Wa-Nife.

Modes of subsistence.—They all live by agriculture. They reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts. Nearly all the villages are surrounded by euphorbia hedges; formerly many villages had mud and occasionally stone walls, but this custom has died out. They breed cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls.

Hunting and fishing.—They dig pitfalls for elephants and also spear elephants. They catch large quantities of fish in the Lake Victoria Nyanza by means of large conical wicker traps "*dema*." The process is as follows:—They have two enormously long ropes; one end of each rope is secured on shore, and the ropes are then paid out into the lake, one rope floats on the surface and from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks; the other rope is a ground rope, and is weighted with stones, and the two ropes are connected at intervals. By means of canoes these ropes are gradually brought round in a semi-circle the size of which gradually decreases. The fish rush shorewards to escape from the drawing in of the net, and rush into the mouth of the big wicker traps which are placed in a row in the shallow water near the shore. At the same time the women walk up and down dragging smaller meshed traps in which they collect myriads of tiny fish the size of a sardine. They fish a great deal at night by torchlight. They state that they got the best hauls of fish after rain; in the dry season they catch comparatively few. Rafts of ambatch wood are used for laying out the net (ambatch is a very light spongy wood growing on the lake shore; it has a prickly bark). They split and dry large quantities of fish and carry it inland from the lake for considerable distances to sell for grain.

Lines and hooks are also used to a certain extent by the Nyakach people and others. The people bordering the lake possess a few dug-out canoes and also a few of the sewn canoes bought from Baganda or Basoga.

Bridges.—They build rough bridges of timber across the rivers when in flood, but not suspension bridges like the North Kavirondo.

Cooking, etc.—They cook in earthen pots inside their huts, and also in the verandah of the huts. All cooking is done by women. The food is served up in little baskets. The father eats with his sons; they generally eat in a little separate hut with open sides built for the purpose. Women eat separately and inside the house.

Fire.—They know the use of firesticks but rarely need them, as they can always obtain a glowing ember from one or other of their neighbours.

[pp. 11-25 not processed]

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
BANTU KAVIRONDO FL4

B 628 suffered an injury at the hands of certain other members of his clan, *e.g.*, has had his wife enticed away or had a cow stolen, he will often proceed to the territory of a neighbouring tribe and lie in ambush, attack and spear the first passer by, likely to fall an easy prey, and will then return home.

In a few days it will leak out that one of the "Wa-so and so" has done this, and the clan of the murdered man will up and wage war with the clan of the murderer, who hopes to obtain his revenge vicariously in this manner; latterly, it is said, it has been done in the hopes that the administration will be induced to punish the clan, and, incidentally, the man who has wronged him.

As a variant of the same line of conduct during the last few years, several cases of suicide have been brought to my notice.

B 762 For example, in Nyole district a young man one day had a violent quarrel with his own mother while cultivating, and eventually beat her with a stick. She ran crying to a village near by, and one of the elders came out and gave the young fellow a thrashing; to every one's astonishment the young man hanged himself that afternoon, and the people of the vicinity told my agent, who went to enquire into it, that he had committed suicide so that his blood relations might lay his death at the door of the elder, and thus start a blood feud against him. Word was, naturally, promptly sent forth that such a procedure would be strongly discouraged, and the incident apparently closed.

MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

L 821 The Ja-Luo believe that the sun goes back to the east overhead during the night, hidden behind the heavens. They use the word *Chieng* indifferently for sun and the Deity. They do not associate the daylight sky with the light of the sun, but look upon it as something quite distinct, and asked what became of it at night. It is known by the term *Polo*. They professed the belief that Europeans were the children of the sun.

L 821 841 They believe that menstruation is caused by the new moon, and also that a woman can only become pregnant at the time of the new moon, and generally that the moon has a great deal to do with the occurrence.

During menstruation a woman does not cook food for others, but merely her own food. She performs all other work as usual.

L 372 The people have no ceremonies connected with fire, such as the extinguishing of all the fires at a certain time, and the relighting with certain rites.

B 845 846 833 Among the Awa-Wanga, many believe that within five or six days of the birth of a child the parents must cohabit, or the child will die. After the birth of twins, the parents are secluded for from twenty days to a month; at the end of the ordained period the brother of the man then formally opens the door of the hut and the couple can go about as usual. This seclusion of the male parent is probably an attenuated relic of the "*couvade*" custom.